

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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TO : EUR:GER:GPA - Mr. Creel

DATE: October 3, 1957

FROM : EUR:GER:GPA - T. D. McKiernan

SUBJECT: Election of Willy BRANDT as Governing Mayor of Berlin

It is now certain that Willy Brandt will become Governing Mayor of Berlin, and the question naturally arises what effect this change in the top leadership may have on the administration of the city and on the relations of the Senate with the Allies. Without wishing to anticipate or duplicate the Mission's reporting on this subject, I believe it may be useful to record a few personal views which are based on a casual acquaintance with Brandt and a close observation of his political activities during recent years.

Brandt was not only the most logical but also the best-suited of the various candidates for the job. One cannot look for another REUTER, but with any luck at all Brandt should provide more vigorous leadership than his two ailing predecessors, stodgy Walter SCHREIBER and vacillating Otto SUHR. Given Brandt's age and talent, we may also expect him to differ from Schreiber and Suhr also in the fact that the position of Governing Mayor may not be for him the climax of a political career, but another rung of a ladder which, given an eventual improvement in his party's position, could eventually bring him to the Chancellorship. As far as representational activities are concerned, and they comprise one of the most significant aspects of the job, Brandt can be expected to represent Berlin to the world with an understanding and dignity which Suhr unfortunately often lacked. While it may be expected that he will lose no opportunity to present Berlin's cause effectively, he is not as likely to deprecate that cause by efficiously intruding Berlin's provincial concerns into every discussion as Suhr did. Judging by his frequent public utterances as Speaker of the House of Representatives, he is more likely to put Berlin's problems in perspective with those of the rest of the world and will remind the world of Berlin's plight in dignified and measured terms which will find a better hearing. In addition, Brandt has obviously understudied Reuter and has acquired some of that sense of drama which stirs too profound a reaction to be labelled a mere "flair for showmanship".

There is no question of Brandt's courage, physical or moral. He will keep a cool head in a bad spot. For example, while the city leaders virtually panicked when the crowd got out of hand at the monster anti-Russian rally last November, Brandt had the presence of mind and the courage to wade in among the rioters proceeding to the Brandenburg Gate and harangue them into turning back.

Brandt is also an exceedingly deliberate man. He does little on impulse; every move is studied. Though he has many ardent supporters, he is very much the lone wolf. He is undoubtedly very ambitious. But ~~ambitious~~

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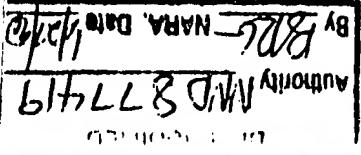
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difference which would make him rather vulnerable in a knock-'em-down, drag-'em-out political battle. He appears to be aware that unscrupulous opponents might exploit some aspects of his earlier life to his political disadvantage (this was attempted recently) and, whatever his courage, he might one day be tripped-up badly by his own hypersensitivity. It might be noted that he never gave Neumann as hard a fight for party leadership as he might have.

Politically, Brandt's position is certainly more tenable than Suhr's for poor Suhr had no party faction of his own and had little public following. The overwhelming support given to Brandt by the SPD cannot, however, be taken as proof that the warring NEUMANN and Reuter-Brandt factions of the Berlin SPD have ended their differences. Even should Neumann pass from the scene, there will remain many in Brandt's own party who dislike him personally and believe that, ideologically, he is a phoney Socialist. Perhaps Brandt's election is a first step in the restoration of party unity, but the complete restoration could take a long time. For the moment, it would be safer to assume that Brandt will head a coalition of three parties—the Brandt SPD, the Neumann SPD, and the CDU. One need only recall how Reuter was harassed by the Neumann faction to imagine what sort of difficulties Brandt may face. With an election coming up next year, the Neumann faction might well be following the tactics of letting Brandt have office now in the hopes of discrediting him by late 1958. However, Brandt's election seems to indicate that the Brandt faction is the larger of the two, no Socialist is apt to have more enthusiastic CDU support, and the Senate should be more stable than it has been for some time. The position taken by Lipschitz is an important factor. Long a Neumann supporter, he recently changed sides to support Brandt. With Neumann now too old to have a political future, the continued existence of the Neumann faction might depend on whether Lipschitz assumes the leadership of it.

In one sense, Brandt remains ~~interested~~. His political experience has been entirely on the legislative side; he has never had an important administrative job. As time goes on, more and more of the energies of the Governing Mayor are being devoted to the more or less routine tasks of municipal administration, a job which is becoming progressively more complicated. Even on the legislative side, Brandt appears to have had little to do with drafting legislation. A number of the key men of the Senate, for example HASS, HERTZ, and KIELINGER, may be expected to retire in the not too distant future and the gaps created by the loss of their experience could create an additional administrative burden for the leader of the Senate. It is interesting to note that Neumann tried to raise this objection in a last-ditch attempt to stop Brandt's candidacy. Lipschitz, who may become Brandt's principal rival, has incidentally won a reputation for being a good administrator.

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The change in mayors is hardly likely to bring much change in Senate policy, for the same coalition interests must continue to be satisfied and all parties will probably prefer to put off issues which might cause serious divisions until the next Berlin elections. The fact that Brandt will provide more vigorous leadership may bring changes of emphasis, however, and some effect may be felt in the field of relationships with the Federal Republic and with the Allies.

Brandt will be a harder man to deal with than Suhr. This will not be because he is less friendly to us but because he will enjoy a more stable position, will follow a steadier line, and will display more energy and tenacity.

It is possible that relations between the Senate and the Federal Government may become less cordial. The continuing gap in the economic situations in Berlin and the Federal Republic, added to the continuing isolation of Berlin, has generated a fair amount of rather irrational but quite human resentment among the Berliners. This resentment is often inarticulate, but occasionally manifests itself quite loudly, for example during the annual budget discussions with the Federal Ministry of Finance. A number of statements made by Brandt from time to time indicate that he either shares this resentment or has catered to it for political purposes. Suhr used to go to Bonn from time to time to tell off Adenauer and the Federal Government, but he usually lost his steam and he was notorious for being easily swayed by Adenauer's reassurances. Brandt will probably find himself or make himself the vehicle of Berliner's complaints about their Western cousins. He is not likely to be unduly moderate in his demands. In his mind he may again be following in Reuter's footsteps. In any case he is not likely to be put off easily by Adenauer, whom he evidently dislikes very much. In view of the vital importance of Federal support—material, moral, and otherwise—hard feelings between the Berlin and Bonn government would be unfortunate.

The Allies may have to face a similar problem. Brandt has shown considerable impatience with what he believes to be outdated remnants of the occupation regime and he can be expected to push hard for further restrictions of Allied controls and especially to associate Berlin more closely with the Federal Republic. For example, Brandt is a passionate advocate of voting rights for Berlin's delegates to the Bundestag, and, unless his new duties divert his attention entirely from his old pre-occupations, we can expect him to harry us until he gets what he wants.

Brandt is a man of his word and we can work well with him, but his pro-Americanism is not unqualified. There is no question that he is Western-oriented and anti-Communist (or as his party is wont to say, "anti-Stalinist"), but he remains a Social-Democrat with much of the intellectual confusion which his party comrades have shown with respect to foreign policy and rearmament issues. Brandt's remarks for general public consumption and the carefully-phrased comments which he delivers in f.

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American visitors do not always correspond with the rather demagogic remarks which he occasionally makes in small party meetings. There he can sound like Ollenhauer or even like Wehner. He appeals to all the German impatience with the existing situation by implying that Western policy is outdated, that new (but unspecified) courses must be followed, etc. Brandt appears convinced that Communism is capable of reform and he appears to be very impressed by both Tito and Gomulka. It is not clear to the writer that he welcomes national Communism merely as a weakening of the Soviet grip on Eastern Europe or whether he feels that it may provide the basis, with the addition of increasing dosages of democracy, for the establishment of an acceptable socialism. In sum, with all his stirring denunciation of Communism, Brandt may underestimate the Communist threat.

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886-NARA Doc# 4249
Authoritative
MD 877419
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